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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CORCORAN BUSINESS OWNER PLEADS GUILTY TO SIX COUNTS OF MONEY LAUNDERING AND AGREES TO FORFEITURE OF PROCEEDS

FRESNO- United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that ABDULLA KASEM AHMED MUTHANA, 44, of Corcoran, California, pled guilty this afternoon before United States District Judge Oliver W. Wanger to six counts of laundering monies which he believed were proceeds of unlawful criminal activity. MUTHANA agreed to forfeit approximately \$220,306.07.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), assisted by state and local law enforcement agents.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Stanley A. Boone, who is prosecuting this case, MUTHANA admitted to laundering approximately \$350,000 which he believed were the proceeds of illegal activity from the period of September 2005 to February 2007. At the time the offenses were committed, the defendant owned the Ranchito Markets in Corcoran and Tulare, California, through which the monies were laundered. As part of the laundering activity, the defendant cashed scores of checks he believed were the proceeds of an unemployment benefits fraud scheme, collected his transaction fee, which was between \$50 per check or 12% of the amount laundered, and remitted the remaining proceeds back to the person in cash. While executing search and seizure warrants in February 2007, the FBI, assisted by state and local agents, seized approximately \$220,306.07 in cash and bank accounts from the defendant. As part of his plea, the defendant agreed to forfeit these monies to the United States.

A superseding information was filed on November 15, 2007 to add two additional money laundering counts relating to transactions in November 2006 and February 2007. These transactions occurred after MUTHANA was indicted on four counts of money laundering. In the November 2006 transaction, the defendant transferred approximately \$55,000 in monies he believed were the proceeds of illegal activity to a bank account located in Bahrain, which was in fact an undercover bank account.

Sentencing in the case is set for February 4, 2008, before Judge Oliver Wanger. The conviction carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and/or a \$250,000 fine. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

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